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# *He who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe*

an exhibition of books which have survived Fire, the Sword and the Censors

University of Kansas Library 1955



## FRANCE

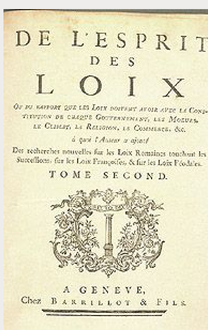
RABELAIS, FRANÇOIS. Parts of *Pantagruel and Gargantua* were censored several times: in 1533 by the *Parlement*; in 1552 by the Sorbonne despite the fact that the third book of Pantagruel had been published by privilege in that year. All of Rabelais was banned in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1938.

MONTAIGNE, MICHEL de. At Lyons, 1595, some parts of the unexpurgated edition of the *Essays* were suppressed on the grounds of tolerance of loose morality.

PASCAL, BLAISE. *Lettres à un Provincial*, 1655-7, which became the center of the furious Jansenist-Jesuit controversy, was burned in 1657. Louis XIV, in 1660, ordered that the book "be torn up and burnt at the 'Croix du Tiroir' at the hands of the High Executioner, fulfillment of which is to be certified to his Majesty within the week; and that meanwhile all printers, booksellers, venders and others, of whatever rank or station, are explicitly prohibited from printing, selling, and distributing and even from having in their possession the said book ... under pain of public (exemplary) punishment."

MOLIERE. In 1664 *Tartuffe* was refused a public performance as offensive to religion by Louis XIV, who, nevertheless, had it played at Versailles at the same time. In 1667 it was played under a different title, after which it was again prohibited by the *Parlement* and condemned by the Archbishop of Paris. After 1667, however, it had no difficulties. Napoleon I once said that if the play had been written in his time he would also not have permitted public performance.

[BORDELON, LAURENT] *A history of the ridiculous extravagancies of Monsieur Oufle...* London, for J. Morphew, 1711. This translation of the humorous French account of Monsieur Oufle, "who believ'd nothing so firmly, as what appear'd incredible to others," includes a tongue-in-cheek condemnation of occult books, "the Superstitious Books, which tainted Mons. Oufle." But even Bordelon, who frequently had to use the protection of a pseudonym, says of one work: "Read his Book and see."


DE L'ESPRIT
DES
LOIX
TOME SECOND.
A GENEVE,
Chez BARRILLOT & FILS.

MONTESQUIEU, CHARLES de. *De l'Esprit des Loix,* Geneva, Barrillot, 1748,* suffered milder but varied forms of criticism and censorship. Montesquieu read the work to a jury of friends (according to the practice of those days) including Helvetius, Crebillon the younger and Fontenelle, who advised him not to publish it. It was put on the Spanish Index of 1790 and the Sorbonne projected a regular censure. Evidence of these attempted bannings is clear in Montesquieu's *Défense de l'Esprit des Loix,* Geneva, 1750.*

[FAUQUES, MARIANNE AGNES de.] *L'histoire de Madame la Marquise de Pompadour,* Londres, 1759, which pretends to be a translation from the English, is a rather scandalous, but hardly offensive, chronicle of the lady's doings. Louis XVI sent a delegate to London to insure destruction of a variant edition of the same year.

VOLTAIRE, FRANÇOIS M. A. Voltaire has been censored and suppressed at every turn. *Lettres Philosophiques sur les Anglais,* 1734, was burned. *Diatribe du Docteur Akakia,* 1752, was almost completely destroyed and the author was arrested for this lampoon on Frederick the Great and Maupertuis. The *Dictionnaire Philosophique* was banned and burned. On exhibit is a facsimile of the *lettre de cachet* of May 17, 1717, throwing Voltaire into the Bastille for some libels against the king. *Candide* has had a difficult history. It was seized in Boston in 1929 on the way to a Harvard class in French literature. In 1944 the Post Office would not allow a copy of it to be offered for sale in a dealer's catalog (see also Balzac). It is now imported without difficulty. Voltaire has the distinction of being the most suppressed author of the eighteenth century.

ROUSSEAU, JEAN JACQUES. Although *Le Devin du Village* was not censored, this copy, Geneva, Pierre Gosse, 1760,* has suffered its private censorship. On the title page the words mentioning performances before the king and queen and all other references to royalty have been inked out although they may still be read. This copy also has some bibliographical interest. Tchmerzine cites one of 59 pp. with this imprint; the Bibliothèque National cites three copies with the note "59p., musique." Since the BN normally indicates pages of music following text by separate pagination, their copies seem not to fit this one, which has 80pp. with music printed throughout.

ROUSSEAU, JEAN JACQUES. *Emile, ou de L'Education,* 1762.* No sooner was the book in print than it was under attack. The author by then, of course, was identified as a dangerous thinker. The theological faculty at Paris published *Determinatio Sacrae Facultatis Parisiensis, Super Libro cui Titulus, Emile ou de L'Education,* Paris, 1762,* which condemned the book in the strictest terms. The *Parlement* of Paris condemned it to be torn and burned and Rousseau was forced to flee to exile in Geneva. (*Emile* lent by Princeton University.)

DIDEROT, DENIS. *Encyclopédie,* Paris, etc., 1751 ff.* It had long been known that the *Encyclopédie* had been secretly censored by Le Breton, publisher and printer of the work, but certain evidence did not come forth until 1933 when an American scholar acquired a copy which miraculously turned out to be Le Breton's own and contained some proofs upon which Le Breton had indicated his censures and suppressions. On display is a photostat of Le Breton's censored proof and a copy of the page as finally printed. The article is on Pyrrhonism. In February, 1759, the entire work was condemned in France.

BEAUMARCHAIS, PIERRE CARON de. *Le Mariage de Figaro* was banned by Louis XVI for immorality and the author imprisoned for a short time. One copy on display, Paris, 1785, reads on the title page: "Representée pour la première fois à Paris, par les Comédiens ordinaires du Roi, le 27 Avril 1784." A second copy, Paris, An six (1798) substitutes for "les Comédiens ordinaires du Roi" the words "Comédiens français," showing detailed efforts of the revolution to suppress mention of royalty. (For individual action to the same purpose see Rousseau, *Devin.*) The text of the 1798 revolutionary edition is changed—further blackening of Count Almaviva—to conform with a performance at the Faydeau theater the previous year. Beaumarchais was himself a book burner. He went on a royal mission to England to destroy the *Memoires secrets d'une femme publique,* an attack on Du Barry by Theveneau de Morande, and succeeded in burning almost the entire edition.

Sommaire.
Rapport
A Sa Majesté Impériale.
Sire,

FOUCHÉ TO NAPOLEON. 4 pp. quarto letter in the hand of and signed by Fouché to Napoleon, 18 Ventôse, an 13 (March, 1805) outlining Fouché's plans for controlling the press, theater and bookselling. Napoleon found no detail too small for his political consideration. Fouché begins by declaring: "The press now floats between license and arbitrary repression, two equally dangerous excesses." He notes that the book trade is in a state of alarming decadence and that "it is heading toward ruin." Liberty of the press, he writes, is a revocable concession of the government and the publishers must be made to understand that. The emperor has written a three-line minute and signed his name twice (one ending in a doodle) on p. 1. Acquired by KU at the Manning sale, Sotheby's, 1955.

BAUDELAIRE, CHARLES. The author, printer and publisher of *Les Fleurs du Mal,* 1857, were prosecuted for an offense against public morals. The story is that Baudelaire was arrested "in the cemetary of Montparnasse, where he was peacefully reading Boswell's *Life of Johnson."* The poems suppressed from the first edition were printed in Brussels as *Les Épaves,* 1866.

BALZAC, HONORÉ de. Balzac has been a favorite whipping boy of censors. In 1864 *omnes fabulae amatoriae* were on the Index where they still were in 1951. *Droll Stories* is still forbidden in Canada. Although the U. S. Customs' ban was lifted in 1930, in 1944 a New York bookshop was forced by the Post Office to block out *Droll Stories* from a sale catalog. In 1953 Balzac and other "such disgraceful writers" were purged from libraries in Spain. In Russia all of Balzac was banned in 1850 but at present large editions of his works are published. Most of his novels deal with the effects of money.

FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE. In 1856 the author was indicted in France for an outrage to good manners—*Madame Bovary*. He was acquitted on the grounds such passages were very few. Plea of counsel was very interesting: that in depicting vice, the author tried to preach virtue. Henry James had the same opinion when he said of *Madame Bovary:* "The most useful of Sunday-school tracts; the pearl of Sunday reading." In 1954 it was placed on the black list of the National Organization of Decent Literature.

HUGO, VICTOR MARIE. Several of his works met with trouble over their critical attitude toward dead kings. There was a literary war in Paris after the suppression of the line "Thinkest thou that kings to me have aught of sacredness?" from *Hernani. Napoléon le Petit* was seized by the police in 1853. Hugo was exiled for twenty years by Napoleon III.



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